

Friday, January 26th, 2007

A long 2 years: Tuesday, President Bush delivered what will be his next to last State of the Union Address. It was the first one delivered to a Congress controlled entirely by the other party. Perhaps because of those two facts, I felt he was more subdued than during some of his prior speeches. He was most animated towards the end of the speech when he talked about the consequences of losing the War on Terrorism and when he introduced the four special guests in the crowd.

I think a couple of his domestic policy agenda items were both new and interesting. He proposed making health care costs tax deductible to individuals. I cosponsored a similar bill last year. This would make getting your own health care more affordable for everyone who pays taxes. As I have previously mentioned, one of the great debates of the next two years will be whether you have increased choice and control over your health care, or whether you are told what you can have by government bureaucrats.

The other proposal I liked was to reduce oil consumption by twenty percent in ten years through alternative fuels. I am heavily involved in a bipartisan effort on this front.

The most stunning thing to me at the State of the Union speech was not anything the President said or did. It was the reactions of the Democrats on the floor. They applauded almost nothing he said all night. Now, I understand that many of them dislike him and disagree with him. Fine. But a lot of what he said should be beyond partisan disagreement. Here are some applause lines delivered by the President for which very few if any Democrats stood or applauded:

1) "First we must balance the federal budget. We can do so without raising taxes" (The silence on their side was deafening)

2) "Together we can restrain the spending appetite of the federal government and balance the federal budget"

3) "...by giving families with children stuck in failing schools the right to choose something better"

4) "When it comes to healthcare, government has an obligation to care for the elderly, the disabled and poor children. For all other Americans, private health insurance is the best way to meet their needs"

5) "...we must remember that the best healthcare decisions are not made by government and insurance companies, but by patients and their doctors." (These lines were interrupted with applause from our side 5 times. The majority was quietest after the liability reform suggestion, made a little noise about information technology, and was quiet for everything else.)

6) "To reach this goal we must increase the supply of alternative fuels..."

7) "We need to resolve the status of illegal immigrants who are already in this country - without animosity or amnesty."

8) "...give these nominees (judicial) a fair hearing and a prompt up-or-down vote on the Senate floor"

9) "...to win the war on terror we must take the fight to the enemy." (Sen. Joe Lieberman (D-CT) stood for this one quite by himself on the Democratic side of the aisle)

10) "On this day, at this hour, it is still within our power to shape the outcome of this battle. So, let us find our resolve, and turn events toward victory" (Lonely Joe Lieberman standing alone again on that side of the aisle)

What can we conclude from all of this? Most of the majority party seems to be for higher taxes, higher spending, higher deficits, government health care, no alternative fuels, amnesty for illegal aliens, no new judges, war in our backyard and defeat. Now, maybe I'm being a little

melodramatic here. I hope I am. I fear I am not.

Your back-up government: The security around the Capitol for the State of the Union speech is always massive. That's because almost everybody in charge of all three branches of government and the military are in the same room. I say almost everybody because they always put two Senators and two Congressmen (one from each party) and one cabinet member and Supreme Court Justice in a safe house in case an attack destroyed the building and everyone in it so that the government can continue. So, had that happened this year, your government would have been run by the following people:

The Executive Branch/President – Attorney General Alberto Gonzales
The House – Reps. George Miller (D-Calif) and John Carter (R-Texas)
The Senate – "not disclosed for security reasons"

Yeah, I'm glad we all made it too.

Until next week, I remain respectfully,

Congressman John Campbell